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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

21 February 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-29: YUGOSLAVIA
(Revision of pages 1-12)

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.
2. We believe that Tito's regime will not be overthrown during 1951 by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt. Therefore, overt armed invasion by Soviet or Satellite forces will be required if the Soviet objective is to be accomplished

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during 1951.

3. Recent military build-up in the Satellite countries (increase in armed forces, stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, etc.) points to a great increase in Satellite capabilities and readiness for military action.

4. Against invasion by the armies of the four neighboring Satellite powers (Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania), organized Yugoslav resistance could be expected to continue for about three months, but probably for no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. Guerrilla-type resistance would continue after collapse of organized resistance.

5. In the event of full-scale invasion by Soviet forces, Yugoslav forces would be incapable of maintaining organized resistance for more than about two weeks unless they were withdrawn and concentrated in the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro. Even if so concentrated, they could not continue organized resistance for more than one month.

6. Substantial Western military assistance might enable Yugoslavia successfully to defend itself against a Satellite

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attack, and to check a Soviet attack for considerably more than a month. However, such assistance would have to be provided several months in advance of an attack, and to be in a form which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units, which are now chiefly equipped with weapons of Soviet, German and Yugoslav manufacture.

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DISCUSSION

SOVIET OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government as soon as practicable, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure. Soviet control of Yugoslavia would greatly facilitate Soviet efforts to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean area and would eliminate a dangerous salient in the southeast European front of the Soviet bloc. Yugoslavia offers an approach for Soviet attacks into Greece or Italy, and is a potential threat to the southern flank of any Soviet advance into Western Europe. Moreover, and probably more basic in Communist calculations, the continued survival of the Tito Government as the only Communist regime not subservient to Moscow is an ideological threat to the Kremlin's control of the world Communist movement.

CURRENT STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF TITO'S REGIME

2. The Tito regime is stable. Internal security forces are large and efficient, and have dealt successfully with

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active opposition elements. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far failed conspicuously. There is no evidence of effective organized opposition within the country and there are no serious personal rivals to Tito himself.

3. A majority of the Yugoslav population are non-Communists or even anti-Communists. Living standards are lower now than before the war. The resentments caused by the nationalization of the economy, by the campaign against religion, and by the development of police state techniques is still strong. In the party hierarchy there is some criticism of the mal-administration of the import program and of unsatisfactory economic progress. It is always possible that some of Tito's followers, though seemingly loyal, may be awaiting an opportunity to improve their fortune at the expense of their leader.

4. Tito's freedom of political action is hampered by his paradoxical ideological position. Any considerable retreat from Communist theory or practice and any conspicuous associations with the Western Powers give substance to the Kremlin's contention that Tito is a traitor to Communism and might cost him the allegiance of some of his more zealous Marxist followers who are indispensable functionaries in his

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totalitarian regime. On the other hand, if he adheres too faithfully to Communist dogma, he may antagonize the Western Powers and non-Communist elements within Yugoslavia whose support is essential if national independence is to be maintained.

5. However, most of the Yugoslav people prefer the present regime to the reestablishment of alien control from Moscow particularly since the relaxation of some of the more unpopular totalitarian measures. Tito's bold and successful stand in the face of mounting Soviet and Satellite pressure has appealed strongly to Yugoslav national pride. Even the long-standing national minority tensions in the country are relatively quiescent. The improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Western Powers, and particularly with the US, has met favorable popular response. In the event of invasion, the great majority of Yugoslavs would support Tito and carry out what resistance was militarily possible.

SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR OVERTHROWING THE TITO REGIME BY MEASURES SHORT OF WAR

6. Since the break between Tito and the Kremlin, an economic blockade has been maintained by the Soviet orbit countries against Yugoslavia. Diplomatic relations have also been virtually suspended and Yugoslav diplomats have been

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harassed and intimidated by Cominform agents. Cominform propaganda has maintained a continuous campaign against Tito, and has portrayed him as a lifelong "Fascist agent" and a willing tool of Western imperialists in a conspiracy to attack the Soviet orbit. The economic and diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia was for a time extremely dangerous to Tito's regime; without the support of the Western Powers, Tito might have collapsed. This danger now seems to be over.

7. Attempts have been made, and will undoubtedly be continued to undermine Tito's regime by the infiltration of subversive agents and saboteurs. Although the Yugoslavs are not easily frightened, Moscow may have some success in spreading the fear of war among Yugoslavs who live near the vulnerable frontiers. The USSR may attempt to stage internal uprisings in Yugoslavia, linked with guerrilla raids from the neighboring Cominform countries. It may subvert elements of Tito's own party who hope for an opportunity to succeed to power.

8. Assassination of Tito by Cominform agents is a continuing possibility. Tito's death would be a major blow to the regime, but would not automatically cause its collapse. Tito's lieutenants are as much committed to opposition to the Cominform as Tito himself. They would probably con-

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time to adhere to the present principles of the regime. As a martyr to the Cominform, Tito might well be a source of strength in consolidating support for the present regime within Yugoslavia. Although stresses and strains would eventually develop in the absence of Tito's strong personality and leadership, they would not in themselves be likely to cause the overthrow of the regime during 1951.

9. Except for the possible ramification that might follow Tito's assassination, we believe that none of the methods short of war which the Kremlin may use will overthrow or even seriously weaken the present Yugoslav regime during 1951. Over a period of some three years the Kremlin has already applied to Yugoslavia the strongest economic, political, and psychological pressures of which it is capable. Tito has not been appreciably weakened by them; indeed his successful stand has apparently strengthened his position with the Yugoslav people. He is thoroughly conversant with the tricks and techniques which may be used against him. The period of his greatest vulnerability to such methods is past. It will now require armed invasion to overthrow his regime.

YUGOSLAV MILITARY FORCES AVAILABLE FOR DEFENSE

10. The Yugoslav Army has a current strength of approximately 275,000 men and could be expanded in 30 days to 600,000

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men organized in 40 fully equipped divisions. Yugoslavia has a further mobilization potential up to 1,000,000 men six months after commencing mobilization, but current and future availability of weapons would restrict arms for additional units to light infantry weapons and some field artillery. This additional manpower would assure an adequate flow of replacements. Yugoslav weapons are generally of good quality but heterogeneous, with Soviet and German World War II models predominating. The outstanding weaknesses in equipment are in tanks (total strength about 400), anti-tank weapons, and anti-aircraft artillery. Yugoslav effectiveness would decline rapidly in the event of hostilities because of inability to replace material lost in combat. The Yugoslav Air Force totals approximately 650 planes, but is hampered by a shortage of spare parts. The Yugoslav Navy is small and inefficient but is nevertheless capable of successfully opposing any Satellite naval operation.

11. Yugoslav forces are capable of good combat performance, particularly if committed to the defense of the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro rather than the Danubian Plain. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers had combat experience in World War II and since then have had fairly good training.

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12. Under present circumstances, only limited improvement can be expected in Yugoslav capabilities during 1951. The Yugoslavs are currently attempting to purchase arms and equipment from foreign sources, particularly ammunition and spare parts for Soviet and German equipment now in use. Some material, such as small arms and light artillery, is being manufactured locally, but production is slow, and it will be some time before new equipment can be produced in significant quantities. Western military assistance in the form of weapons and equipment which could readily be integrated into Yugoslav units would materially strengthen Yugoslav defensive capabilities if the program were commenced several months before an invasion. Combat capabilities could be further increased by the acquisition of certain items of equipment, such as anti-tank weapons and rocket launchers from the West, but only after Yugoslav personnel had been trained in their use. Major assistance would be required to bring the Yugoslav Air Force to equality with the combined air forces of neighboring Satellites.

SOVIET AND SATELLITE ARMED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

13. Soviet forces presently disposed in countries adjacent to Yugoslavia consist of six line divisions -- two each

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in Austria, Hungary, and Rumania -- and are insufficient by themselves for a successful invasion of Yugoslavia. Additional forces could, however, readily be drawn from the USSR to make up an adequate force for an invasion.

14. The armies of Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria have been increasing steadily and now total approximately 440,000 men, organized in 34 divisions. In the case of the latter three countries, strength is in excess of peace treaty limitations. With partial mobilization over a period of at least 30 days, ^{it} could be increased to 925,000 men organized in 47 line divisions, 11 combat brigades, and supporting independent regiments. Additional equipment would be required, but this could readily be supplied by the USSR by the end of April 1951. The armed forces of these Satellites are now estimated to be equipped with approximately 1,000 tanks, and reinforcements could be obtained on short notice from the estimated 700 tanks now with Soviet forces in these Satellites. Satellite air forces total approximately 900 combat aircraft; their combat effectiveness is low. Satellite naval forces are negligible.

15. The fighting qualities of these forces would be at least good in comparison with Yugoslav forces, particularly in successful offensive operations. Bulgarian and Rumanian

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forces are the best trained and equipped of the four Satellite armies, but all Satellite forces would have the major advantage of extensive and timely Soviet logistical support for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

16. There exists a further substantial Satellite reserve in the armies of Czechoslovakia and Poland. While, in case of need, these reserves might be thrown against Yugoslavia, the political and logistical problems involved in their use appear so great that their possibility seems remote.

VULNERABILITY OF YUGOSLAVIA TO INVASION

17. Most of the areas along Yugoslavia's extended frontiers are highly vulnerable to invasion from the neighboring Satellite states. Northwestern Yugoslavia, including Slovenia and northern Croatia, could be quickly cut off from the rest of the country by a drive southward from Hungary through Zagreb and toward Fiume. The country north of the Sava River between Zagreb and the Danube could also be easily invaded at a number of points along the Hungarian frontier. The Danubian Plain north of Belgrade is especially vulnerable to armored attacks from either Hungary or Rumania. The Belgrade area would be hard to defend against attacks across the Danubian Plain or from the south through the Morava River valley.

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Yugoslav Macedonia could be cut off by attacks from Bulgaria
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